

# '82 cents: Wide in variety, but narrow in value

By Roger Boye

**T**his week's column answers more questions about coins and currency.

**Q**—I've read that the government made seven varieties of pennies last year. Is this true? If so, are any of them rare?—G.B., Aurora.

**A**—The Lincoln cent endured two major changes during 1982: the well-publicized shift to zinc "slugs" coated with copper and the mid-year introduction of revamped "master dies" that included smaller numbers in the coin design.

Government workers failed to coordinate the use of new zinc "slugs" with "small-date dies," creating seven distinct types of cents. For the record, they are a 1982 no-mint-mark, large-date zinc cent and a large-date copper cent; a 1982 no-mint-mark, small-date zinc cent and a small-date copper cent; a 1982-D large-date zinc cent and large-date copper cent; and a 1982-D small-date zinc cent.

All of this is academic to would-be coin investors. None of the varieties has any special value on the hobby market because the government apparently issued billions of each.

**Q**—My \$1 silver certificate, series 1935-D, is missing the words "In God We Trust" on the back side. Is this a valuable printing error?—Y.P., Chicago.

**A**—Hardly. Treasury bosses added the motto to \$1 bills starting in 1957. Your specimen rolled off the press sometime between 1949 and 1953. It would be rare if it carried the motto!

**Q**—Our grandfather gave us a box of souvenirs he had for 50 years. In it were four tiny "half dimes" dated 1862. Are they counterfeit or just play money?—D.F., Downers Grove.

**A**—Neither. Until 1873 Uncle Sam made 5-cent coins out of silver, using half as much precious metal as in the dime. Bureaucrats introduced the larger nickel 5-cent pieces in 1866 and gradually phased out production of the half dime, in part because people found half dimes easy to lose.

Your relics would retail for \$5 each if in "good condition."

**Q**—Can you explain what the small numbers—such as A2, C3, etc.—mean in the upper-left corners of \$1 bills?—D.A., Chicago.

**A**—Currency is printed on large sheets of paper, 32 bills to the sheet. The numbers indicate the position of each bill on the sheet. For example, "1" identifies the upper-left quadrant, with letters "A" through "H" noting the eight positions within the quadrant.

**Q**—While vacationing in northern Minnesota this summer, we got more than 26 Canadian pennies in change, with the earliest dated 1956. Are any of them worth keeping?—R.E., Skokie.

**A**—Probably not. Circulated specimens of Canadian cents made since 1956 are not yet collectors' items.